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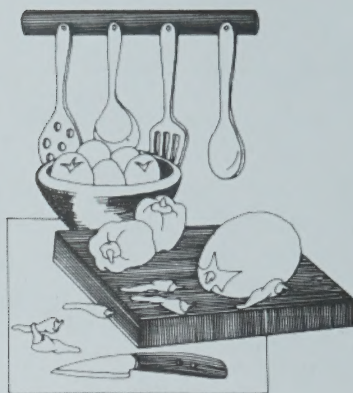
AN EVENING OF RENAISSANCE MADRIGALS

Grant Llewellyn
CONDUCTOR

Handel & Haydn Society
Orchestra and Chorus

APRIL 9, 1999

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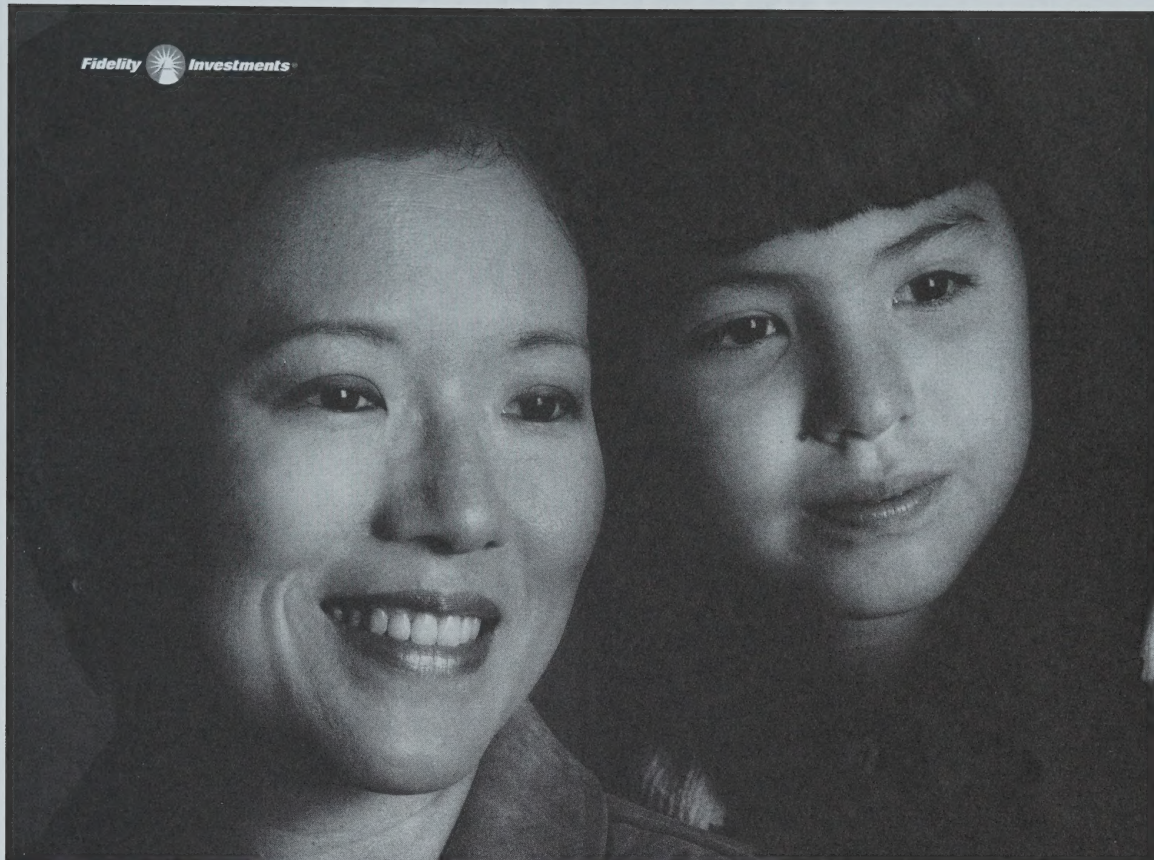
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Handel & Haydn Society
Christopher Hogwood, Artistic Director
John Finney, Associate Conductor
1998-1999 Season

Friday, April 9, 1999 at 8:00 p.m.
New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall

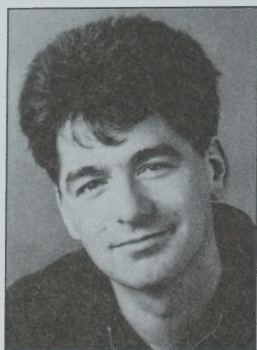
Grant Llewellyn, conductor

O nata lux	Thomas Tallis [1505-1585]
When David heard	Thomas Weelkes [1576-1623]
Two Hornpipes (from <i>The Fairy Queen</i>)	Henry Purcell [1659-1695]
April is in my mistress' face	Thomas Morley [1557(8)-1602]
Construe my meaning	Giles Farnaby [1563-1640]
Weep, weep, mine eyes	John Wilbye [1574-1638]
Sing we at pleasure	Thomas Weelkes
Symphony while the swans came forward (from <i>The Fairy Queen</i>)	Henry Purcell
Ave verum corpus Haec dies	William Byrd [1543-1623]

—Intermission—

Dixit Dominus	Claudio Monteverdi [1567-1643]
Prelude to Act III: "If Love's a sweet passion." Act I Tune, Jig (from <i>The Fairy Queen</i>)	Henry Purcell
Madrigals from Book 4 "Ah, dolente partita!" "Sfogava con le stelle" "Luci serene e chiare" "Quel augellin che canta"	Claudio Monteverdi
A Dance of the Followers of Night (from <i>The Fairy Queen</i>)	Henry Purcell
Nisi Dominus	Claudio Monteverdi

GRANT LLEWELLYN, CONDUCTOR



No stranger to the Boston music scene, Grant Llewellyn served as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1990 to 1993, and Guest Conductor for the Boston Pops in the summers of 1994 and 1997. Mr. Llewellyn has been Principal Conductor of the Royal Flanders Philharmonic since 1995 and has made several recordings with them, including their most recent release, Goeyvaert's *Aquarius*, which won the Caecilia and Snepvangers Prizes. Mr. Llewellyn was Associate Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales from 1990 to 1995 and Principal Guest Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra from 1993 to 1996. This season marked his debuts with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra in Japan as well as his English National Opera debut, conducting *The Magic Flute*. He has recorded works by William Mathias for Nimbus and three contemporary trombone concerti with Christian Lindberg for BIS.

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The H&H Chorus is funded in part by a generous gift from the Wintersauce Foundation

ENGLISH & ITALIAN MADRIGALS

Steven Ledbetter

In the century spanning 1520 to about 1620, the Italian madrigal was born, took root, reached a brief, brilliant efflorescence, and died out as a living art, though its influence moved to distant countries like England, Germany, and Scandinavia. The term “madrigal” generally refers to almost any musical setting of secular verse in the sixteenth and through much of the seventeenth century. The settings are often for two to eight voice parts, but most commonly four or five; they lacked a separate instrumental accompaniment, but instruments could play along if desired. Though choral performance was possible, particularly of madrigals written in a grand style for public ceremonies, the greater number of performances was private, with a single voice on each part. The madrigal is thus a form of chamber music, analogous in many ways to the consort of viols or the later string quartet. The present program presents a selection of madrigals and other works from England, then turns to one of the greatest masters of the root tradition, Claudio Monteverdi, and intersperses the evening with orchestral numbers from an English heir to the early Baroque tradition.

In England the artistic flowering was fostered by the long decades of relative peace and stability during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but it extended even after her death to the Jacobean dynasty that followed. The two greatest masters of church music during the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign were Thomas Tallis and William Byrd. Tallis (ca. 1505-1585) was a generation older than Byrd (1543-1623), but both men lived to the ripe old age of eighty and between them dominated nearly twelve decades of musical glory. Following them came another group (all of whom ceased their activity before the death of Byrd) whom we know as the English madrigal school, including Thomas Morley (1557 or 1558-1602), Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623), John Wilbye (1574-1638), and others.

Little is known about the early years of Tallis and Byrd. But by the mid-1540s Tallis was a

member of the Chapel Royal, serving there more than forty years, from the reign of Henry VIII through those of Edward VI, Mary Tudor, and more than half the long reign of Elizabeth I. He managed to maintain this position even though he was a Catholic, and English politics then centered to a great extent on the monarch's religion, veering precipitously from Catholic to Protestant and back again several times. Most of Tallis's large-scale church music probably dates from the relatively brief reign of Mary, who was Catholic, rather than from the time of Elizabeth, who actively suppressed the Catholic church. Byrd, too, was repeatedly fined for his refusal to celebrate the Church of England, particularly in the 1580s, the worst period for English Catholics. Yet during this same period, he composed a number of

official compositions, including a song composed in 1588 to celebrate the victory over the Spanish Armada with a text by the queen herself! Evidently his musical genius not only saved him from prison, but kept him in the center of official musical life.

In 1575, when Tallis and Byrd petitioned for an increase in salary, Queen Elizabeth granted them letters-patent giving them the

exclusive right to print and publish music in England. (A monopoly of this sort was a way for a monarch to raise an artist's level of income without being out-of-pocket; the recipient could either enter a new business without fear of competition or license the right to do so to others for a cash payment.) The result was the publication of the 1575 collection of motets, *Cantiones sacrae* (“Sacred songs”), which contains Tallis's *O nata lux*, for five contrapuntal voices, for the liturgy of the Transfiguration.

Byrd's 4-voice *Ave verum corpus* was composed with the Latin text for the feast of Corpus Christi, but also appeared with an English text—not a translation, but a re-texting for Protestant use, as *O Lord, God of Israel*. Byrd has sometimes been called “the English Palestrina”; that epithet, implying a spiritual serenity of outlook, is belied by the intense and passionate harmonic daring of



William Byrd

this piece. *Haec dies* is a text that Byrd set no fewer than three times—for three, five, or six voice parts.

During the early part of the 16th century, English music—and especially English church music—remained largely isolated from Continental influences; during the later part, many composers had bowed, in some sense or other, to the predominant Italian style, especially in secular music. The sudden influx of Italian composers and music contributed greatly to the rapid rise, culmination, and end of the English madrigal tradition between 1588 and 1627. During that four-decade span, English publishers brought out fifty editions of madrigals, nine of them consisting of Italian madrigals in translation, the remainder works by native composers. (Though this outpouring of music seems quite remarkable and produced many wonderful pieces, it is worth noting that the Italian madrigal tradition was far more extensive; a single popular Italian composer, like Luca Marenzio, published as many editions of his own work as appeared from the hands of all the English composers put together!)

In Italy, the madrigal was an unusually intimate fusion of words and music. The texts often came from the Petrarchan tradition of love poetry, and composers sought to translate every possible verbal image into its musical equivalent. In the 1570s, under the influence of a wave of Petrarchan imitation that swept Europe, such poets as Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney began to create an English equivalent of the highly musical verse that Italian composers had so long enjoyed. Two publications of Italian madrigals with English words—*Musica Transalpina* of 1588 and *Italian Madrigals Englished* of 1590—set the stage for the creation of an English tradition. So popular were these anthologies, aimed at amateur singers “for the exercise of Mastic daily,” that three more collections of similar translations soon appeared.

Thomas Morley almost single-handedly created the vogue for the Elizabethan madrigal. Most of his works—including the much-loved canzonet *April is in my mistress’ face*—employs a

lighter Italian genre, the canzonetta, which generally avoided the detailed “word-painting” of the serious madrigal. Morley’s brightness, lively grace, and harmonic clarity seemed boldly new to his contemporaries. Giles Farnaby wrote mostly canzonet-like pieces in imitation of Morley, but *Construe my meaning* is a more serious work in true madrigal style. The real masters of the Italian madrigal in its English guise were Weelkes and Wilbye. Wilbye as the more serious of the two in his work, while Weelkes also composed a number of the lighter canzonets (with “fa la” refrains), such as *Sing we at pleasure*. Wilbye’s *Weep, weep mine eyes* is one of the relatively few English madrigals that really demonstrates a complete absorption of the Italian madrigal style; it is from his *Second Set of Madrigals* of 1609, generally regarded as the finest single body of work in the whole tradition of the Elizabethan madrigal.

The one other piece of English church music included on this program comes from the Anglican tradition: a “full anthem” setting by Thomas Weelkes, though he published it in a book of secular madrigals, from which it is stylistically

indistinguishable.

The Italian madrigal arose naturally in the courts of Renaissance Italy, which cultivated both poetry and music to the highest degree. And the poet who most influenced the tradition was the 14th century Petrarch, whose work was adopted in its form, poetic stance, and imagery. Most frequently encountered, because so easily parodied, is Petrarch’s frequent use of oxymoron, as in his famous image describing love as an “icy fire.” Petrarch’s very vocabulary became the vocabulary of Italian poetry, taking on layers of meaning that could be enriched by a master or cheapened by an imitator.

It became a favorite game of composers to take a popular text and attempt to translate the words as directly as possible into musical images, while at the same time capturing the emotional meaning of the text. Melodic lines might run up to *cielo* (sky or heaven), flow up and down as *onde* (waves), or peer out from between the barlines as two whole notes on *occhi* (eyes). All of this was a

*... each composer sought a new
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atmosphere of overt competition
caused the musical style to
develop rapidly, like plants
forced in a hothouse.*

subtle private game between the composer and those who sang his music.

Often the same texts were set again and again, and each composer sought a new and more brilliant way to express the same imagery. An atmosphere of overt competition caused the musical style to develop rapidly, like plants forced in a hothouse. Within little more than a half century, the genre had reached a peak of virtuosity, marked in particular by three Italian masters: Luca Marenzio, Carlo Gesualdo, and Claudio Monteverdi, who, alone of the three, also lived long enough to go beyond the unaccompanied madrigal to help create the early Baroque style in his operas and his later madrigal publications.

Monteverdi's *Fourth Book of Madrigals* (published in 1603) was the beginning of the revolution. Some of the madrigals in this book were attacked, even before publication, by a conservative theorist named Artusi, who found in them the destruction of all that was right in the way a composer ought to treat harmonic dissonance. Monteverdi's brother Giulio outlined a reply to Artusi in the preface to Monteverdi's *Fifth Book*, in which he argued the words were central in determining the means of expression, and the music should be a response to the intensity of emotion that they called forth—even if this included breaking the “rules” of the past. In the Fourth Book, Monteverdi demonstrated his utter mastery of the madrigal genre but also pointed the way to the future—and not even the distant future, at that. His opera *Orfeo* was produced in 1607, and it was in the dramatic world of opera that his harmonic inventions were to flourish most fully. And he even hints, slightly, at the

approach of opera with *Sfoggava con le stelle* and its recitative-like chanting that breaks into passionate outbursts of sustained singing.

After beginning his career largely as a madrigal composer, Monteverdi worked in both church and operatic composition. In both cases he took much from his experience as a madrigal composer, expressing the meaning of the Latin words (as in *Dixit Dominus* and *Nisi Dominus*) while creating a firm and sonorous architecture for the proper expression of the sacred texts.

When Henry Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* was first performed in 1692, it was called an opera, but it was of a particular type unique to the English stage of the Restoration and quite unfamiliar today, combining actors (speaking parts) in the principal roles, while singers appeared only in parts that were decorative or tangential to the plot. The work is actually an elaboration of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Shakespeare's play drastically trimmed to make room for fifty-nine (!) musical numbers. In addition to an elaborate musical segment in each act (unrelated to the Shakespearean plot), the score also included “act tunes” (essentially overtures and interludes), dances, and music to cover changes of scenery, providing for a varied, but extremely lengthy evening in the theater.

—Steven Ledbetter was Musicologist and Program Annotator of the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 1998. He writes frequently about a wide range of music and edits critical editions of the work of the madrigalist Luca Marenzio and the operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan.

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TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Tallis: O nata lux

O nata lux de lumine,
Jesu redemptor saeculi,
Dignare clemens supplicum
Laudes preces que sumere.
Qui carne quondam contegi
Dignatus es properditis.
Nos membra confer effici,
Tui beati corporis.

O Light of light, by love inclined,
Jesu, redeemer of mankind,
With loving-kindness deign to hear
From suppliant voices praise and prayer
Thou to raise our souls from hell
Didst deign in fleshy form to dwell,
Vouchsafe us, when our race is run,
In thy fair Body to be one.

Weelkes: When David heard

When David heard that Absalon was slain,
he went up to his chamber over the gate, and wept;
and thus he said: 'O my son Absalon, would God I had died for thee,
O Absalon, my son, my son.'

Farnaby: Construe my meaning

Construe my meaning, wrest not my method;
Good will craves favor, witness the high God.
If I have meant well, good will reward me;
When I deserve ill, no man regard me.
What shall I say more? speech is but blasting.
Still will I hope for life everlasting.

Wilbye: Weep, weep mine eyes

Weep, weep mine eyes, my heart can take no rest.
Weep, weep my heart, mine eyes shall ne'er be blest.
Weep eyes, weep heart, and both this accent cry;
A thousand deaths I die.
Ay me, ah, ah cruel Fortune! ay me.
Now, Lesander, to die I fear not.
Death, do thy worst! I care not!
I hope when I am dead in Elysian plain,
To meet, and there with joy we'll love again.

Weelkes: Sing we at pleasure

Sing we at pleasure,
Content is our treasure.
Sweet Love shall keep the ground,
Whilst we his praises sound.
All shepherds in a ring,
Shall dancing, ever sing.

Byrd: Ave verum corpus

Ave verum Corpus, natum de Maria Virgine:
Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine:
Cuius latus perforatum,
unda fluxit sanguine:
Esto nobis praegustum in mortis examine.
O dulcis, O pie, O Jesu Fili Mariae,
miserere mei. Amen.

All hail, O true Body, of the blessed Virgin born,
Which in anguish to redeem us dids't suffer upon the cross
From whose side, when pierced by spear,
there came forth both water and blood:
Be to us at our last hour the source of consolation.
O loving, O holy, O Jesu, thou Son of Mary,
have mercy on me. Amen.

Byrd: Haec dies (Psalm 118)

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus.
Exultemus et laetemur in ea. Alleluia

This is the day which the Lord has made:
we will rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia.

Monteverdi: Dixit Dominus (Psalm 110)

Dixit Dominus Domino meo:
sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos
tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.
Virgam virtutis tuae emittet Dominus ex Sion:
dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.
Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae
in splendoribus sanctorum
ex utero ante luciferum genui te.
Iuravit Dominus, et non paenitebit eum;
Tu es sacerdos in aeternum
secundum ordinem Melchisadech.
Dominus a dextris tuis confregit
In die irae suae reges.
Iudicabit in nationibus, implebit ruinas:
conquassabit capita in terra multorum.
De torrente in via bibet:
propterea exaltabit caput.
Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

The Lord said unto my Lord:
sit thou at my right hand, until I make
thine enemies thy footstool.
The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion;
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
Thine is the foundation in the day of thy power;
in the beauties of holiness
I have born thee from the womb before the morning star.
The Lord hath sworn and will not repent;
thou art a priest forever
after the order of Melchisadech.
The Lord at thy right hand has broken
kings in the day of his anger.
He will judge the nations, he will fill them with ruins:
He will break the heads in the populous land.
He shall drink of the torrent on the way;
therefore he shall lift up his head.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, now and forever,
world without end. Amen.

MADRIGALS FROM BOOK 4

Monteverdi: "Ah, dolente partita!"

(text by Giovanni Batista Guarani)

Ah, dolente partita!
ah, fin de la mia vita!
da te parto e non moro? E pur i' provo
la pena de la morte
e sento nel partire
un vivace morire,
che dá vita al dolore
per far che moia immortalmente il core.

Oh, painful separation!
This is the end of my life!
I part from you and do not die? And yet I do experience
the sorrow of death,
and as we part I feel
a life-giving death,
which keeps my pain alive
only to make my heart die unendingly.

Monteverdi: "Sfogava con le stelle"
(text possibly by Ottavio Rinuccini)

Sfogava con le stelle
un infermo d'amore
sotto notturno ciel il suo dolore,
e dicea fisso in loro:
"O immagini belle
de l'idol mio ch'adoro,
si com'a me mostrate
mentre cosí splendete
la sua rara beltate,
cosí monstraste a lei
i vivi ardori miei.
La fareste col vostr'aureo sembiante
pietosa sí come me fate amante."

In converse with the stars
a man sick with love
gave vent to his pain beneath the night sky,
and, gazing at them, said:
"O lovely images
of the idol whom I adore,
just as you show
her rare beauty to me
when you shine like this,
if you could only show her
the ardent flames that burn me!
Then with your golden countenance you would make
her compassionate just as you make me affectionate."

Monteverdi: "Luci serene e chiare"
(text possibly by Ridolfo Arlotti)

Luci serene e chiare,
voi m'incendete, voi, ma prov'il core
nell'incendio diletto, non dolore.

Clear, bright eyes,
you set me on fire, you do, but my heart feels
pleasure, not pain, in the flames.

Dolci parole e care,
voi mi ferite, voi, ma prova il petto
non dolor ne la piaga, ma diletto.

Sweet, dear words,
you pierce me, you do, but my breast feels
not pain, but delight, in the wound.

O miracol d'amore:
Alma ch'è tutta foco e tutta sangue
sí strugg'e non su duol, muor e non langue.

Oh, miracle of love:
A soul that is all fire and all blood
perishes without pain, dies without wasting away.

Monteverdi: "Quel augellin che canta"
(text by Giovanni Batista Guarani)

Quel augellin, che canta
sí dolcemente e lascivetto vola
or da l'abete al faggio
ed or dal faggio al mirto,
s'avesse umano spirto,
direbbe: "Ardo d'amor, ardo d'amore."
Ma ben arde nel core
e chiam'il suo desio
che li rispond': "Ardo d'amor anch'io."
Che sii tu benedetto,
amoroso, gentil, vago augelletto.

That little bird which sings
so sweetly and flies merrily
now from the fir to the beech
and now from the beech to the myrtle-
if it had human understanding
it would say: "I burn with love, I burn with love."
But it does really burn in its heart
and it calls to its beloved mate,
which answers it: "I also burn with love."
Blessings on you,
you loving, gentle, charming little bird.

Monteverdi: Nisi Dominus (Psalm 127)

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum,
in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.
Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem,
frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.
Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere:
surgite postquam sederitis,
qui manducatis panem doloris.
Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum;
ecce hereditas Domini, filii:
merces, fructus ventris.
Sicut sagittae in manu potentis:
ita filii excussorum.
Beatus vir qui implevit desiderium suum
ex ipsis: non confundetur
cum loquetur inimicus suis in porta.
Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Except the Lord build the house,
they labor in vain that build it.
Except the Lord keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain.
It is vain for you to rise before dawn:
rise when you have sat down,
ye who eat the bread of sorrow,
when he has given sleep to those he loves,
Behold, children are an inheritance of the Lord,
a reward, the fruit of the womb.
As arrows in the hand of the mighty,
so are children of the vigorous.
Blessed is the man who has fulfilled his longing
by them: he shall not be perplexed
when he speaks to his enemies at the gate.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, now and forever,
world without end. Amen.

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The Handel & Haydn Society is America's premier chorus and period orchestra. Under the artistic direction of internationally renowned conductor Christopher Hogwood since 1986, H&H is a leader in historically informed performance. Each H&H concert is distinguished by the use of instruments, techniques, and performance styles typical of the period in which the music was composed. Founded in Boston in 1815, H&H is the oldest continuously performing arts organization in the country, with a long tradition of musical excellence. In the nineteenth century, the Society gave the American premieres of numerous important works, including Handel's *Messiah* (1818), which H&H has performed every year since 1854, *Samson* (1845), *Solomon* (1855), and *Israel in Egypt* (1859), and Bach's Mass in B Minor (1887) and *St. Matthew Passion* (1889). H&H reaches a wide audience through recordings on the London Records/L'Oiseau-Lyre label, national broadcasts, and performances across North America. Continuing H&H's tradition of artistic innovation, the 1995–1996 season featured a fully staged opera production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with the Mark Morris Dance Group. The production travelled across the country and to the prestigious Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. The 1997–1998 season offered a semi-staged production of Handel's *Julius Caesar* with Sylvia McNair in the role of Cleopatra. This season H&H gave its first world premiere in over 20 years with Dan Welcher's acclaimed *JFK: The Voice of Peace*. In addition to performances at Boston's Symphony Hall, H&H also features critically acclaimed concerts at New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall. H&H's innovative educational outreach program brings the joy of classical music to more than 7,000 students each year in 47 public schools throughout Massachusetts.



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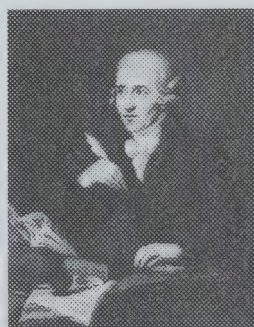
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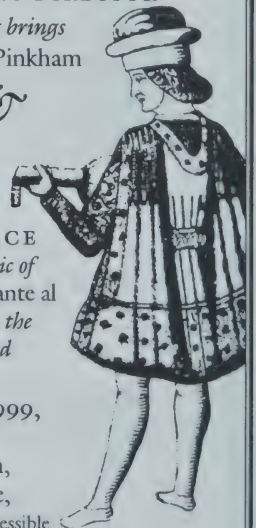
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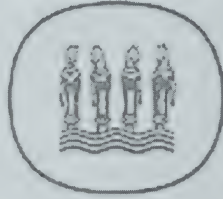
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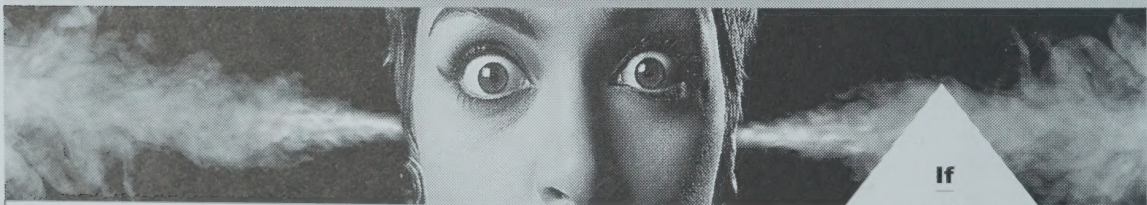
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*We are proud to support
the Handel & Haydn Society*





**"OH,
it's not spicy."**



**If
you like
cayenne pepper.
On your
jalapeños.**

90.9wbur
In-depth News & Information

If you're not getting the whole story, consider what you're missing.